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Tee To Green



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No Rest for the Weary



he golfing season may be winding down, but that doesn't mean we will. For most of us, the season's end means thinking ahead to the next season's beginning. We spend the fall and early winter preparing our turf for a healthy comeback in the spring, and we give considerable thought to the past season, reflecting on what went well and what practices could be improved to ensure ongoing—or enhanced—agronomic success.

Then there are those much-needed capital improvements or projects that were, perhaps, put on the backburner during the summer months. In short, our “slow” time has become our catch-up time. And the once-cherished period to recharge has become a thing of the past. (No, we do not have the luxury of spending our winters in Florida, like many outside our profession believe!)

We do, however, have many educational opportunities to take advantage of, which is the other way we spend our off-season. Aside from various local, regional, and national conferences, this year the MetGCSA is offering—in conjunction with the Connecticut AGCS—an educational program on December 1 (see Upcoming Events, page 10) that covers a variety of practices designed to foster overall plant health. Speakers will take you through the many facets of reduced fertility, better water management, promoting better rooting, and many more environmentally responsible golf course management practices and techniques. Be sure not to miss this fine educational opportunity.

It's Tough to Improve on Success

By the time this issue hits the mail, I will officially hold the title of MetGCSA past president. Having served on the board since 1997, I've found the past 14 years extremely rewarding and filled with nothing short of fond memories. And now, I look forward to serving the association over the next two years as your past president.

Our association has been so well managed by my predecessors that I was hard-pressed to improve on their successes. I do feel, however, that during my term we made some nice strides. Agreeing to hire an executive director was among them. I am looking forward to seeing the association grow and prosper with an executive director, who can help



Tony Girardi, CGCS
MetGCSA President

manage the Met's day-to-day activities and, more important, build lasting relationships throughout the golf industry. This, no doubt, will add yet another touch of professionalism to our association.

We have always had extremely strong leadership, both locally and nationally, and have had many great presidents run our association. I am thankful to all who served before me and want to wish future board members all the best going forward.

Many Thanks

There are so many people I'd like to thank, I simply cannot list them all. Among those who helped me early in my career are Tim O'Neill who gave me my start in the golf business; Larry Pakkala who groomed me to become the superintendent I am today; Scott Niven, my neighbor, who always responded to my calls with helpful advice; and the many area superintendents and turf professionals who I can call close friends after 20 years in the Met. Thank you to all who have supported me through my career and my time served within the association. With your counsel, I've not only become a better superintendent, but also a more effective leader.

I am equally thankful for what the association has done to elevate the status of our profession throughout the golf industry. We have truly come a long way over the past few decades, earning much-deserved respect as educated, environmentally responsible professionals. We should all be proud of our accomplishments and the important role we play as turfgrass professionals within the golf industry.

I wish our association—and my fellow members—every success going forward!

Tony Girardi, CGCS
President

Feature

Cultivating Relationships You Can Bank On

*Forging Close Ties With Your Green Chair,
GM, or Pro May Mean More to Your Job
Success Than You Realize*

by James King



You can do a brilliant job of managing your crew—and juggling the demands of maintaining a picture-perfect golf course—and still have no guarantee of job success. Why? Because you overlook one critical component of excelling on the job: forging strong relationships with your pro, your green chair, your GM, and even your club president.

According to Bernie Cronin, a management consultant and managing di-

rector of Sandler Training Institute in Pompano Beach, FL, “Only 10 percent of firings at the managerial level are due to technical incompetence. The other 90 percent are a result of failing to get along with others, especially the boss.”

Though this statistic was culled from the corporate world, it rings just as true in the golf course industry. Let’s face it, who doesn’t know a superintendent or two—or three—whose jobs were lost in

a personality clash or whose positions might have been spared had they put rapport-building a little higher on their to-do list?

So while you may excel at creating a strong sense of teamwork among the people who report to you, it may be time to evaluate the relationship-building strategies you have in place for those who either influence—or directly determine—the course of your career. The pay-off could be huge.

Trust: The Linchpin of Long-term Career Success

Without trust, there is no relationship. And without a relationship, there is no future.

Before you roll your eyes and start thinking that any discussion of trust inevitably leads to the warm-and-fuzzy world of New Age psychobabble, consider this: Stephen M.R. Covey, renowned management expert, CEO of CoveyLink Worldwide Trust, and author of the megaseller *The Speed of Trust* and his equally well-known father, Stephen R. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, note the pitfalls of failing to build trust among colleagues and superiors.

“Low trust,” they assert, “creates hidden agendas, politics, interpersonal conflict, interdepartmental rivalries, win-lose thinking, and defensive and protective communication. Low trust slows everything—every decision, every communication, and every relationship.”

Sound familiar? How many times have you gotten together with fellow superintendents and heard complaints about how long it takes to get something approved, for example, or the politics involved in getting funds okayed for a vital piece of equipment, or the “games” they have to play to protect their budget, to retain their staff—not to mention their own job?

Covey, who defines trust as *confidence* and distrust as *suspicion*, goes on to say that trust paves the way for quick—and even less costly—decision-making. He cites as one example Co-founder, Chairman Emeritus, and former CEO of Southwest Airlines Herb Kelleher, who once approved the complete reorganization of his company’s maintenance organization on the basis of a three-page summary drawn up by one of his trusted subordinates. He approved the \$700-million initiative in less than five minutes. High trust, in this case in particular, led to amazingly fast results and none of the costs associated with drawing up extensive proposals and holding lengthy meetings.

Jim Pavonetti, Fairview’s superintendent for the past three years, knows firsthand what goodwill and trust can do. Having produced consistently good conditions on the golf course, his general manager is more than happy to smooth the way for a quick-and-easy budget approval process. “He understands the relationship between money and excellent conditions,” says Jim, “and he clearly trusts me to make that happen.”

So how do you cultivate that level of trust in you from your green chair, general manager, and pro? The truth is there are almost as many strategies for building trust as there are types of people. But three characteristics of people—in this case, superintendents—whom others trust stand out:

They’re consistent. Above all else, trustworthy superintendents are consistent in what they say and what they do. They don’t show favoritism, gossip or badmouth others, or act differently with different people, putting on a good face, for instance, with members and club officials, and then acting like a tyrant when dealing with colleagues or crew members.

Consistent superintendents are also genuine in all aspects of their work and in their interactions with others. There’s no game playing or hidden agendas. They’re honest and straightforward in their feedback to others and always respectful.

Consistency or predictability in all aspects of human interactions goes a long way toward building a healthy relationship with peers and superiors and ensuring you stand out as a professional worthy of their trust and support.

Matt Burrows, Winged Foot’s director of golf courses for the past three seasons, attributes his success largely to his focus on forthright communication. “Whether I’m talking to the caddies, our pro, the GM, or my green chairmen, I avoid duplicity at all costs. I treat everyone with the same courtesy and respect, and as a result, I’ve earned their trust and support.”

The payoff? “We look out for each other,” says Matt. “If the caddies hear someone venting about the course, they’ll pull me aside and tell me, even come to my defense if appropriate. It goes without saying I do the same for others at the facility. They know they can count on that.”

Fairview’s Jim Pavonetti describes his relationship with both his GM and pro as nothing short of perfect. “We all have each other’s back” says Jim, pointing to his pro’s commitment to fielding member questions or concerns about the course. “If he doesn’t have an answer to a member’s question,” explains Jim,

“rather than shrug it off, he takes the time to ask me and then get back to the member with an answer. It, of course, goes both ways.”

They’re reliable. It’s simple: People trust those they can count on. Their word is their bond. Reliable superintendents keep promises, meet deadlines, and address and resolve problems in as timely a manner as possible.

“When I’m in meetings,” says Stanwich Club Superintendent Scott Niven, I always portray a can-do attitude regarding any and all projects or challenges pertaining to my areas of responsibility, and then, of course, I always make sure to follow through.”

What green chair or GM wouldn’t trust a superintendent who completes projects or requests just as promised, who consistently comes in on budget, and who comes to green committee meetings prepared and with proposed solutions to any problems on the course?

And what pro wouldn’t appreciate and support a superintendent who can be relied on to keep him informed of any course projects or procedures that may disrupt play or raise questions he wouldn’t otherwise be able to answer?

Just as important in building trust—and goodwill—is proving to others that you can be counted on to lend a hand when needed, to go “above and beyond,” not just for your own department, but for the good of the club or facility. “Not my job,” is not a part of a reliable superintendent’s vocabulary. Let’s face it, mutual back scratching is at the heart of many successful relationships. You help out a colleague at the club one time, and then it’s likely you can bank on that person’s reciprocating when your back’s against the wall.

Scott Niven is accommodating not only to club colleagues, but also to his membership. “Over the years,” says Scott, “I’ve been asked





to do all sorts of favors for club members—everything from diagnosing a problem with their lawn to providing them with discarded sod pieces for their property. I do these things with a pleasant, glad-to-help-out attitude. You can never have too many friends among the membership.”

They hold themselves accountable. As Covey writes, “Results matter! They matter to your credibility. They matter to your ability to establish and maintain trust with others. There’s no place to hide here—either you produce or you don’t. You may have excuses. You may even have good reasons. But at the end of the day, if the results aren’t there, neither is the credibility and neither is the trust. It’s just that simple; it’s just that harsh.”

Trustworthy superintendents are not only focused on results, but also on personal accountability for achieving—or *not* achieving—those results. When things go awry, they don’t play the blame game.

There’s nothing worse than trying to point the finger at someone or something when a green fails or a hole location is inappropriately placed. You’ll be looked on far more favorably if you can address an error in judgment or practice with a well-thought-out plan of action for remedying the situation. Wasting your green chairman’s time with an obvious attempt to cover up your blunder, not only shatters trust and credibility, but can also be the strike against you that costs you your job.

As Jim Collins writes in *Good to Great*, his book on corporate excellence and what he calls Level 5 Leadership (the most effective level of leadership): “Level 5 leaders look out the window to attribute success to factors other than themselves. When things go poorly, however, they look in the mirror and blame themselves, taking full responsibility.”

Communication: It’s More Than Words

If trust is the foundation of solid relationships, effective communication builds on and strengthens that foundation. Renowned management consultant and guru Peter Drucker once estimated that a full 60 per-

Effective superintendents make it a habit to get out of their offices and shops to do what not long ago was popularly known as “management by walking around.”

cent of all management problems result from faulty communication. He may have underestimated that figure. Chip Wilson, CEO of 360Solutions, cites SIS International Research study results showing that 70 percent of small to mid-size businesses claim that ineffective communication is their primary problem.

As with building trust, there’s a lot more to communicating effectively than simply exchanging information. Communication is an ongoing process of deepening your understanding of people, situations, opportunities, and obstacles to achieving individual and club goals.

This in-depth knowledge and understanding doesn’t come about through an occasional email, voicemail message, or fancy PowerPoint presentation. It might be helpful to think of effective communication as three-pronged strategy involving *visibility*, *frequency*, and *emotional intelligence*.

1. Visibility. Despite our ability today to share information through the internet, email, websites, blogs, social networking sites, and text messaging—to name just several of the more well-known technological tools available—there’s no replacing the relationship-building power of face-to-face contact.

Effective superintendents make it a habit to get out of their offices and shops to do what not long ago was popularly known as “management by walking around.” When you’re out and about, making yourself available not only to your crew but to others at

your club or facility, you increase the chances of being able to identify potential problems while gaining a greater understanding of the tasks and challenges facing others who may not work directly for you—and who, in fact, may have an indirect or direct influence on the perceptions of members and the people you report to.

It’s these brief encounters that are the grease to smooth-running relationships. They help create a sense of camaraderie and friendship. And when the chips are down, who are you most likely to go to bat for—someone you know primarily through email reports or someone you consider a friend?

There’s another important reason to increase your visibility. Simply “being there” increases the opportunities to meet and greet members eager to hear specifics on course conditions. It’s usually during these encounters that you have the important opportunity to correct any misconceptions about conditions or maintenance procedures before they become topics of conversation at your next green committee meeting.

“I got some great advice from Greg Nichol when I began here six years ago,” says Dave Dudones, superintendent at North Jersey Country Club. “He told me, ‘Address problems before they make it to the grill-room.’ If we have an area under construction or the greens are slow and puffy because of rain and humidity, I make sure I’m on that putting green Saturday and Sunday morning, conveying those conditions to the membership so nothing is a surprise.

“I also got another great tip from Joe Alonzi when I started,” continues Dave. “He said, ‘Make sure you’re friendly with the bartender and the caddie master. They’re the ones with their finger on the pulse of the club on any given day. They’ll hear about members’ concerns before you do and can give you the heads up you need to address any issues before they’re brought to your attention. This will show members that you’re on top of your job and attentive to their concerns no matter what the issue.’”

Of course, whenever you communicate with colleagues or club members, you want to take care not to develop a reputation for wasting people’s time with idle chatter, which leads to the second key component of communication. . . .

2. Frequency. Some say that you can't communicate enough, but you probably already know from your own experience that this is not true. We've all had to deal with people with the dreaded TMI Syndrome—the seemingly uncontrollable urge to share Too Much Information. People with this predisposition might send so many emails that you eventually start ignoring them, or frequently leave long, rambling voicemails that strain not only your patience, but also your ability to listen effectively. It's important to avoid these communication pitfalls not only with your crew, but also with your green chair, GM, and club officials who need to stay informed.

How do you determine how frequently to communicate with your bosses? Simply ask. Formally or informally, find out:

- **How often** they want to be updated.
- **What** each person wants to hear about—and, just as important, what they don't necessarily want to know.
- **How much detail** they need or want.
- **Their preferred method of communication**, such as telephone, email, or face-to-face.

Matt Burrows of Winged Foot is a strong proponent of Habit 5 of Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*: "Seek First to Understand, Then Be Understood."

"Every time I've started a new position, the first thing I've done is work to understand the expectations of others, including when and how they prefer to communicate and exactly what they want to know," says Matt, who, as a result, has developed a Weekly Priority Sheet (example at right) that describes main goals, projects, and maintenance procedures that he and his staff expect to accomplish each week.

"I share this with anyone and everyone who has any involvement with my operation: my green committee chairmen, the general manager, club president, caddy master, interested green committee members, and the 15 to 20 professionals on my staff," says Matt. "I can't tell you how much this simple process has helped earn the trust and respect of my 'bosses' and enhanced the productivity of my operation."

Asking people how they prefer to communicate is a good example of the third component of effective communication. . . .

3. Emotional intelligence. The power of emotional intelligence in relationships first gained attention through the work of behavioral psychologist Daniel Goleman. Author of *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, Goleman describes emotional intelligence—which he calls "EQ" for Emotional Quotient—as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships." He firmly believes EQ is a far more powerful determinant of success in life and business than IQ.

It's easy to see how EQ applies to communication and relationship building. The more proficient you are in recognizing and understanding your feelings and the feelings of those you're interacting with, the more effective you'll be in building a sense of collaboration and cooperation with those people.

But while the connection between emotional intelligence and relationship building may be obvious, actually using emotional intelligence on the job is not so easy. With all the day-to-day stresses involved in maintaining a golf course, where decisions often need to be made quickly and information transmitted quickly, it's difficult to step back and step into the other person's shoes. These two skills may help:

Question deeply. To truly understand another person's state of mind or goal, you have to ask questions. Most people, however, ask a single question or two. Skilled relationship-builders dig deeper until they get to the core feeling or motivator underlying the other person's statement, feelings, or goal. This is not to say that one should interrogate the other person, but a few, well-placed follow-up questions like, "Tell me more about that..." or "Why do you feel that way?" can

go a long way to deepening your understanding—and avoiding future misunderstandings.

Listen openly. Listening is one of those skills that everyone agrees is important but few actually practice. Listening openly means putting aside any of your own feelings that may get in the way of your hearing and truly understanding the other person's point-of-view. It's not an easy task, but it's one that is essential to building the collaborative type of relationship in which all parties benefit. Feelings that get in the way of listening openly may include:

- **What's-in-it-for-me.** You listen for anything that relates directly to you. You filter everything else out.
- **Personality clash.** You've never liked the person you're listening to. Anything he or she says lacks merit, as far as you're concerned.
- **Defensiveness.** You feel the other person is attacking you. You're thinking about how to retaliate.
- **Resentment.** The other person has no idea of—and no appreciation for—all the things you do and the high-level expertise you bring to the table. Instead of listening, you're mentally drawing a dartboard around the person's face.

Matt's Weekly Priority Sheet

WEEKLY PRIORITY LIST			
Week: June 21, 2010			
Events: WFGC Guest Day Mon. (8:00 S/G, 60 players, West only.) Cantor Fitzgerald Outing Mon. (12:45 S/G, East & West.) Ladies Member-Guest Tues. (8:15 S/G West only, closed until 2:00.) Green Committee Meeting Tues. (5:00.) 9ers Member-Guest Thurs. (9:00 S/G East only, closed until 11:30.)			
Main Objectives: Make applications. Improve new club lawns, nurseries, weak rough areas.			
Notes: Add red stone to cart paths!!! Hawkshaw Golf to finish bridge reconstruction. Set up Aerway. Order Scotts Step 1. Remove soil piles from lot on 5 East. Try to reschedule fall fairway aerations. Order Iron & topdressing.			
✓	TASKS	PRIORITY	DAY
	Spray Primo (.135 oz/m)/Fertilizers/Signature/Daconil/Bifenthrin on greens.	A	Monday
	Spray Primo (.35 oz/m)/ Chipco GT/Phosphite/Bifenthrin on tees.	A	Mon. - Tues.
	Spray Primo (.35 oz/m)/ / Chipco GT/Phosphite/Bifenthrin/Sync on fairways.	A	Mon. - Tues.
	Spray Revolution/ MnSO ₄ on greens and water in 6 min.	A	Wednesday
	Spray 1690 on tees and water in 6 min.	A	Thurs. - Fri.
	Spray 1690 on fairways and water in 6 min.	A	Thurs. - Fri.
	Brush and double-groom greens.	A	Monday
	Planetair West greens and approaches.	A	Thursday
	Needle-tine East greens.	A	Tuesday
	Fertilize all drainage slits, plug lawns, and the fairway nursery with starter.	A	Friday
	Aerway fairways and tees.	B	Monday - Friday
	Apply 1 lb. N/m to weak areas of bunker banks and roughs using SCU.	B	Wednesday
	Apply 0.25 lb. N/m to approach/fairway interfaces using 18-0-11 w/ Mn.	B	Monday
	Aerate/seed/fertilize all bridge/cartpath entrance/exits using Tall Fescue.	B	Monday - Friday
	Add soil and hydroseed thin areas along brook banks and road entrances.	B	Monday - Friday
•	Aerate/fertilize/hydroseed thin rough and club ground areas with WF mix.	B	Monday - Friday
	Topdress cracks in bridges with stone dust.	C	Friday
•	Deep-tine aerate and Vertique high traffic areas.	C	Monday - Friday
	Rototill and hydroseed rough areas where sod was stored on or stripped from.	C	Friday
	Aerate new clubhouse lawns.	C	Thursday

Key: • = Task in progress. ✓ = Task completed. _ = Task moved to next week. X = Task deleted. m = 1000 ft.² S/G = Shotgun. T/T = Tee times.

While there are other components of emotional intelligence, these two skills—questioning deeply and listening openly—may be the most powerful in understanding and working effectively with those who, subject to the same obstacles to understanding, have a hand in your success on the job.

Apawamis Club Superintendent Bill Perlee knows, firsthand, the power of EQ. “Having had to educate and build relationships with many green chairs and committees over the years,” says Bill, “I realized that one of the keys to success is to ask the right questions upfront about what they expect of you and the golf course conditions and then listen, with a completely open mind, to their answers.

“One of my most effective green chairs began his tenure by sitting down with me, one-on-one, and honestly admitting he knew nothing about the daily routine of our department,” remembers Bill. “After further discussion, I was able to put myself in his shoes as a green chair—‘green,’ essentially, to the job of overseeing the success of a golf course maintenance operation.

“Keeping his perspective in mind, I was able to work with him to come up with a method for speeding up the learning curve—for him and all future green chairs. We created a Course Standards manual that spelled out, in detail, the roles and responsibilities of our department. In addition to sparing me the tedious task of educating every new ‘boss’ and green committee member, having a manual that spells out precisely what it takes to maintain the golf course has helped us avoid labor cuts and sell our equipment needs at budget time,” says Bill, who’s living proof that approaching working relationships with an open mind pays dividends.



Courageous Confrontation: Defusing Ticking Time Bombs

Of course, no matter how trustworthy you’ve proven to be and no matter how skilled a communicator you are, situations will always come up that strain even the most collaborative and cooperative relationships. Your green chair, for example, may move up a deadline on a task that he knows requires more time. Or you hear that the pro has made some disturbing and negative

Of course, no matter how trustworthy you’ve proven to be and no matter how skilled a communicator you are, situations will always come up that strain even the most collaborative and cooperative relationships.

comments about you behind your back.

What to do? With the emphasis in this article on the importance of maintaining control, understanding the other person’s perspective, and always striving for a cooperative, collaborative relationship, you might reasonably assume that confronting the other person runs counter to the spirit and objectives of relationship building. But according to the authors of the book *Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior* which deals with this delicate subject, initiating a confrontation—when handled properly—helps solve problems and strengthen relationships.

A face-to-face confrontation with someone, especially a boss, is something most of us prefer to avoid, to say nothing of *initiating* one. But failure to close a gap in expectations, agreements, or behavior almost always festers into the larger and more costly problems that crop up when working relationships are at odds. It takes courage to initiate such confrontations. The good news, however, is that paying attention to a few key strategies can help you turn these confrontations into relationship-building conversations.

Here’s the three-step approach the authors recommend:

1. Start with safety. This refers to your tone and approach during the confrontation—especially the opening moments. If you come across as angry, defensive, or resentful, the other person is likely to mirror the same unproductive emotions.

A more constructive approach is to make the other person feel “safe” from venting or personal attack. The best way to do this? First, make sure your words and the tone of your voice align with a collaborative approach.

For example, “I’d like to talk to you about something that I think is important to both of us.” By making it clear that you’re interested in an outcome that benefits both parties involved, the other person is more likely to be open to discussing the matter with you.

2. Describe the gap. Here, you discuss the disconnect between the expectation and the situation. For example, “Three months ago, we established a timetable we both agreed would be difficult but doable. If I understand what you’re saying now, the deadline is being moved up.” This statement doesn’t sugarcoat the situation, but it doesn’t assign blame either. It sticks to the fact (“the deadline is being moved”) without implying fault (“YOU moved the deadline.”)

As part of describing the gap, share your understanding of the facts of the situation as objectively as possible. For example, “As you know, my crew is already working overtime, and I was under the impression from our meeting that you understood that trying to finish the project any earlier might affect both our day-to-day work, as well as the quality of the project’s outcome.”

As when starting with safety, describing the gap and sharing your understanding of the facts should be done as dispassionately as possible, keeping your body language and vocal tone as calm as possible.



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3. Ask a question. With your description of the gap complete, your next step is to gain a fuller understanding of the situation. Notice that the purpose is to uncover additional information—not to demand an explanation, which can come across as an accusation.

For example, “What’s changed about the project?” sounds much more collaborative and less personally accusatory than, “What’s going on here?”

Initiating productive confrontations in this way encourages smoother problem solving, such as identifying additional resources needed or shifting priorities in order to meet the underlying goals and objectives.

Unfortunately, confrontation is one of the inevitable consequences of the job we do,” says Rolling Hills Super Glenn Perry. “Few aspects of a club draw more attention than the condition of the golf course. If you’ve just aerified greens or entered into a project that disrupts the quality of someone’s game, that’s when the chatter begins. At this point, you have to decide who to appeal to: the masses or individual members.

“I’ve always taken the tack of approaching members individually. . . making sure to do it in private,” Glenn cautions. “There’s no need to make a public display. Rather remain calm, keep your emotions in check, and above all else, listen.

“This is never the time for an agronomic lesson or a recap of past weather conditions. You’ll get far better results,” he continues, “if you ask members directly what’s bothering them. I’ve found that, more often than not, they just want to be heard or vent. If you listen carefully enough, you’ll find it’s less about the greens being slow and bumpy and more about the fact that they couldn’t get their ball to the hole. When handled correctly, these one-on-one sessions are likely to not only defuse a seemingly bad situation, but also gain you a supporter.”

The Final Responsibility

The strategies involved in building and strengthening relationships—Trust, Communication, and Courageous Confrontation—are just that: strategies. Leveraging those strategies to protect and advance your career is, ultimately, up to you.


As with any long-term strategy, success requires commitment, patience, and perseverance. But with the stakes so high, the time and energy involved in relationship-building are well worth the investment.

James King is a business writer and novelist who writes extensively on interpersonal communication and emotional intelligence. His novel, Bill Warrington’s Last Chance, was recently published by Viking.

Scorecard

LI and Met Members Have Winning Day at Wheatley Hills

by Mark Chant, Tournament Committee Co-Chair

 On September 13, the LIGCSA and MetGCSA convened at Wheatley Hills Golf Club in East Williston, NY, to participate in three special events: NYSTA’s annual fundraiser, the Poa Annual; the Met Area Team Championship Qualifier; and the Superintendent Championship.

The staff at Wheatley Hills did a great job welcoming our associations. Everything from the food to the golf course was first class.

Stephen Rabideau and his staff did a wonderful job prepping the course—particularly on the heels of one of the hardest summers in recent history. Steve amazed us with championship conditions. The high rough and fast greens made for an extremely challenging round of golf.

Congratulations to low-gross winners Mark Chant and Gregg Stanley for their winning scores in the Superintendent Championship.

Here are the highlights of the day’s events:

The Superintendent Championship

For the MetGCSA

Gross

- 75 Mark Chant, Colonial Springs GC
- 78 Sean Cain, Sunningdale CC

Net

- 69 Ken Benoit, Glen Arbor GC
- 73 Glen Dube, Centennial GC

For the LIGCSA

Gross

- 77 Gregg Stanley, The Bridge
- 78 Jeff Hemphill, Nissequogue GC

Net

- 69 Pete Cash, Harbor Links GC
- 72 Eric O’Neill, The Towers CC

The Poa Annual

Gross

- 78 David Lippman, Westchester Turf
- 79 Mike Giacini, Giacini Corp.

Net

- 73 Ken Lochridge, Muttontown Club
- 73 John Bresnahan, BASF Chemical Co.

Proximities

Closest to the Pin

- #8 Matt Hyrb, Wheatley Hills GC 12’ 7”
- #14 Earl Millett, Ridgeway CC 13’ 6”

Longest Drive

- #5 John Carlone, The Meadow Brook Club
- #15 Charlie Siemers, Emerald Tree Care Co.



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Scorecard

MetGCSA Makes Respectable Showing in Met Area Team Championship

by Mark Chant, Tournament Committee Co-Chair

The 2010 Met Area Team Championship took us to eastern Long Island to play The Bridge on October 7. Thirteen superintendent associations from the Mid-Atlantic to New England were represented at this annual season-ending event.

The Bridge was very gracious in hosting us and more than lived up to expectations. Located in Bridgehampton, NY, on land that was once a racetrack, the course was designed by Rees Jones and offers breathtaking views of Peconic Bay and Sag Harbor.

Having recently hosted the USGA Mid-Am, Gregg Stanley and his staff had the course in tiptop shape. Unfortunately, superintendents were playing in this championship so far fewer low scores were shot!

In this event, each association is represented by an eight-man team. Each team is paired into four twosomes (two Gross, two Net). The format is a Two-Man Best Ball. At the competition's end, each team's four scores are totaled, and the association with the lowest score wins.

Once again, New Jersey finished on top, narrowly defeating the team from Con-

necticut. The Met and Long Island teams had respectable showings, rounding out the top four. Representing Cape Cod, Chris Tufts from The Country Club at New Seabury had the low individual score of 78.

Representing the Met were Gross Division players Mark Chant and Blake Halderman with a Best-Ball 76 and Jeff Wentworth and George Corgan with an 89. The Net Division players were Ken Benoit and Greg Gutter who shot 67 and Glen Dube and David Dudones who came in with a Net 72.

Placing third out of 13 teams is certainly worthy of a hearty congratulations. Great playing, everyone!

Many Thanks

Special thanks to our seven national sponsors—Agrium Advanced Technologies, Aquatrols, BASF, Bayer, The Care of Trees, Syngenta, and Toro—who joined our championship six years ago. Their contributions not only help support this special event, but also allow us to donate to a worthwhile charity of our choice. Many thanks also to Agrium's Andy Drohen for the time and effort he put into making this event such a great success.

Jim Santoro

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The Results

Below is a list of teams and proximity winners. We look forward to seeing everyone at the Met Area Team Qualifier next fall as the championship is truly an event you don't want to miss.

Team Scores (Par 288)

1st / 296	GCSA of New Jersey
2nd / 301	Connecticut AGCS
3rd / 304	MetGCSA
4th / 308	Long Island GCSA
T5th / 310	Philadelphia AGCS
T5th / 310	Hudson Valley GCSA
7th / 311	GCSA of New England
8th / 314	GCMA of Cape Cod
9th / 315	Central New York GCSA
10th / 317	Mid-Atlantic AGCS
11th / 320	Central Penn GCSA
12th / 327	Rhode Island GCSA
13th / 337	Northeastern GCSA

Closest to the Pin

Hole #2	Jim Swiatlowski GCSA of New Jersey (Sponsored by Syngenta)
Hole #5	John Winterhalter Central New York GCSA (Sponsored by Bayer)
Hole #14	Paul Wickey Central Penn GCSA (Sponsored by BASF)
Hole #16	Frank Franceshini Long Island GCSA (Sponsored by Toro)

Longest Drive

Net Div.	Tony Gustaitis Philadelphia AGCS (Sponsored by The Care of Trees)
Gross Div.	George Corgan MetGCSA (Sponsored by Agrium Adv. Tech.)
Sponsors Div.	Dennis DeSanctis Syngenta (Sponsored by Aquatrols)

Individual Gross

78	Chris Tufts Cape Cod GCSA
----	------------------------------

Sponsorship Team Winners

70	Kevin Collins & Kevin Seibel Aquatrols
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Two-Man Team High Score

Gross / 90	Mike Cornicelli & Mike Whitehead Rhode Island GCSA
Net / 82	Steve Thys & Matt Crowther Cape Cod GCSA

Super/Green Chair Tourney Goers Enjoy Season's End at Wee Burn

by Ken Benoit, CGCS, Tournament Committee Co-Chair



And the Winners Are (from left to right): Fred Feldman & Rob Alonzi of Fenway GC, Carl Boyhan of Orange County GC, Mike Scott & Peter Rohlf of Wykagyl CC, Scott Ferguson of Westchester Turf Supply, Tom Weinert of Plant Food Co., Blake Halderman of Brae Burn CC, Steve Rabideau of Wheatley Hills GC, Tim O'Neill of CC of Darien, John Carlone of Meadow Brook Club, and Jeff Dickson.

What better way to end the season than a nice day of golf at one of the premier venues in the Met area. On October 18, MetGCSA members convened at Wee Burn Country Club in Darien, CT, for this year's Superintendent/Green Chairperson Tournament.

Doug Drugo and his staff clearly gave it their all to have the golf course in top condition. Green speed was a hot topic at the end of the round, especially among those who attempted to putt from above the hole.

We'd like to thank Doug, the Wee Burn Board of Governors, and the entire club staff for hosting our event at their beautiful facility.

Here's the rundown on the results:

Member/Green Chairperson Division

Net Winner

65 Rob Alonzi/Fred Feldman, *Fenway GC*

Gross Winner

74 Mike Scott/Peter Rohlf, *Wykagyl CC*

Member/Member or Guest Division

Net Winner

67 Scott Ferguson/Gale Stenquist
Westchester Turf Supply/LaCorte Equipment

Gross Winner

68 John Carlone/Steve Rabideau
Meadow Brook Club/Wheatley Hills GC

Closest to the Pin

#4	Tom Weinert, Member <i>Plant Food Company</i>	4' 5"
	Carl Boyhan, Guest <i>Orange County GC</i>	8' 4"
#7	Tim O'Neill, Member <i>CC of Darien</i>	5' 0"
	Skip Tetz, Guest <i>Orange County GC</i>	9' 8"

Longest Drive

#18	Blake Halderman, Member <i>Brae Burn CC</i>
#18	Jeff Dickson, Guest

Watch for our 2011 Calendar of Events. We've already booked a number of great area clubs that you're sure to enjoy for our outings and special events.

Member News

Remembering Guido Cribari

It is with deepest sympathy and regret that we announce the death on October 8 of MetGCSA friend and industry supporter, Guido Cribari. He was 95.

A talented and sought-after sports editor, working until he retired in 1989 at what is now *The Journal News*, Guido was a memorable character . . . among Met members and apparently the entire golfing community.

"He knew everything about everybody," says Rick Carpinello, *Journal News* sports editor. "He could control a room with his stories."

An avid golfer himself, Guido once described Westchester as the "Golfingest County in the World" and is credited with helping get the former Westchester Classic up and running at Westchester Country Club, along with former Rangers owner William Jennings and sports promoter Fred Corcoran.

For his numerous contributions to the golf industry, Guido was the very first recipient of the Met's prestigious John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award. He then went on to write profiles for the *Tee to Green* on a long list of Reid Award recipients after him.

Guido is also the only journalist to be honored with awards for his service to golf by the MGA and the Metropolitan PGA. "Guido was always promoting golf in the best possible way," says former MGA tournaments director Gene Westmoreland.

Born on July 15, 1915, Guido was one of 10 children. He and his wife, Dorothy, who passed away in 2004, lived in Mt. Vernon, NY, until they moved to a house in Tuckahoe that Guido built himself in 1953. Some of the framework is signed by friends like Brooklyn Dodgers legend Pee Wee Reese.

Our sincere condolences to Guido's family. He is survived by daughter, Lisa Cribari and her husband, Raymond Infarinato of Bedford, NY, and son Stephen Cribari and his wife, Jane Kirtley of Minneapolis, MN. He is also survived by a sister, Dolly DiMarzo of Vero Beach, FL.

Upcoming Events



Make Merry With Fellow Met Members!

*K*eep December 10 open for our always festive annual Christmas Party, an evening of great food, fun, and dancing. With the year-end fast approaching, we're already securing sites for our 2011 meetings and social events. If you and your club are willing and able to host a meeting, please contact the appropriate committee chairmen.

For professional events, contact either of our Tournament Committee co-chairs: Ken

Benoit at 914-241-0700 or Mark Chant at 631-643-0047. Our Social & Welfare Committee co-chairs are Mark Millett (914-949-4203) and Paul Gonzalez (914-273-3755). Both are available to discuss any upcoming social events.

MetGCSA Christmas Party

Friday, December 10

The Apawamis Club, Rye, NY

Host: Bill Perlee

Industry Events

2010 MetGCSA & CAGCS Fall Education Seminar

Wednesday, December 1

The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT

Join fellow Met and Connecticut association members for the fall education seminar. Running from 8 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., the session will offer valuable insight into such topics as:

- Reduction of pesticides and new approaches to increased fertility
- The benefits of using seaweed and kelp extracts
- Soil, water, and soil surfactant chemistries
- The effects of vermicomposts on soil microbiological and chemical properties
- And much more

For further information, contact Education Chairman Rob Alonzi at 914-472-1467.

35th Annual New Jersey Green Expo Turf and Landscape Conference

Tuesday–Thursday, December 7–9

Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, NJ

Log on to www.njturfgrass.org for details, or call the New Jersey Turfgrass Association at 973-812-6467.

Empire State Green Industry Show

Tuesday–Thursday, January 11–13

Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY

The Empire State Green Industry Show offers an excellent opportunity to network, obtain research updates, and visit the trade show, featuring more than 100 exhibitors. As always, key speakers representing all segments of the green industry will be featured.

For further information, call the show office at 800-873-8873 or 518-783-1229, or visit the website at www.nysta.org.

CAGCS Winter Seminar

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

Hawthorne Inn, Berlin, CT

Join the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents for their 2010 Winter Seminar.

For further information, call the CAGCS office at 203-387-0810, or visit the website at www.cagcs.com.

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY

Plan now for our upcoming Winter Seminar, and watch for details. For further information, call our Education Chairman, Rob Alonzi, at 914-472-1467.

14th Annual New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show

Monday–Thursday, March 7–10, 2011

Rhode Island Convention Center
Providence, RI

As always, the 2011 annual conference and show's educational sessions will bring you cutting-edge turfgrass management tactics and techniques as well as a host of practical management tools.

For further information, call the NERTF show office at 401-841-0004, or visit their website at www.nertf.org/show/.

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Spotlight

Fairview Country Club and Super Jim Pavonetti Host MetGCSA Annual Meeting

by Kevin Collins

The MetGCSA Annual Meeting was held at Fairview Country Club on November 10. Hosting this must-attend business meeting was Superintendent Jim Pavonetti.

A relative newcomer to the club, Jim took the helm in January 2008 and is now fast-approaching his third anniversary at this gem of a club, nestled in the northwest corner of Greenwich, CT.

A Well-Traveled Club

Like many of the clubs in the greater New York Metropolitan area, Fairview Country Club has a long and storied history. Founded in 1904 in Bronxville, NY, Fairview got its start on the Fairview Links, a nine-hole course built in the late 1890s. When the lease expired in 1907, the club relocated to the 95-acre Decker farm in Elmsford, fashioning the gently rolling land into an 18-hole golf course. That location was short-lived, however, since New York City reclaimed the property to build an aqueduct for their water system.

Forced to move once again, the club relocated across the road, just 500 yards away, to the Shradys estate. Fairview contracted with famed architect Donald Ross to build an 18-hole course, which opened for play in 1912. The club remained in Elmsford until 1968 when the commercialization of the surrounding area and the development of Interstate 287 forced yet another move to the club's current site in Greenwich, CT.

Robert Trent Jones Sr. designed the golf course on the picturesque, wooded 200 acres that once belonged to St. Luke's Convalescent Hospital. The hospital building became the clubhouse.

After 42 years at this site, it looks like the club will be staying put, once and for all!

One of the club's claims to fame is its impressive lineup of influential personalities. Among the best-known to come out of Fairview was John Inglis, who was hired as the golf professional/caddie master in 1907. John retired in 1964 after an astounding 57-year career.

Under his tutelage, Fairview produced a

slew of outstanding golfers, both amateur and professional, from its caddie ranks. Included in this number are the Turnesa brothers (all seven of them), the Farrell brothers (John Farrell was the winner of the 1928 U.S. Open), Tom Creavy (winner of the 1931 PGA Championship), and Tony Manero (winner of the 1936 U.S. Open).

Making Tracks to Fairview

Growing up with what he remembers as a "normal middle-class life," Jim was born and raised in Eastchester, NY, near California Road, not too far from Siwanoy. "I played every sport and had a good childhood," remembers Jim.

Jim's entry into the business was at the local Lake Isle Country Club. Following his dad, Les, there in 1987, Jim accepted work on his hometown course's maintenance crew. "I started at Lake Isle part time about a week after my dad started working there," says Jim. "I was there nearly nine years."

After his fourth season on the crew, Larry Grasso was hired as the superintendent. He persuaded Jim to go to school to further his career. "If it hadn't been for Larry, I probably would have been content to simply continue working for the town," says Jim. Instead, Jim enrolled in the two-year turf management program at Rutgers.

In 1995, he made another career-changing move: He left the security of working civil service to accept the assistant's position with Bert Dickinson at Willow Ridge. "Believe it or not, it was a big step for me," says Jim, noting that Larry, again, prodded him to pursue the position. "Larry had worked with Bert at Westchester Country Club under Ted Horton, which, no doubt, went a long way toward helping me get the position," adds Jim, forever grateful for Larry's guidance.

"In the six seasons I worked for Bert, I learned the value of being extremely organized and levelheaded," says Jim, crediting Bert for preparing him well for the next step in his career.

In January 2001, Jim accepted his first superintendent's position at West Point Golf Club. Two years later, it was off to Saratoga



Jim Pavonetti, CGCS

County for a five-year stint at The Edison Club, and in January 2008, Jim accepted his current position at Fairview.

In 2009, Jim earned his GCSAA certification, and this past season, met the rigorous environmental criteria that enabled Fairview to become a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

"Fairview has been a great experience for me and full of challenges," he says. Next year, Jim will embark on a series of improvements that will start with the installation of an all-new irrigation system and continue in 2012 with work outlined in a master plan the club hired Rees Jones to develop. "We'll be rebuilding all the bunkers and tees to name just a few of the planned course improvements," says Jim, noting that the next few seasons will, no doubt, provide some real excitement for his two assistants, Justin Mills and Scott Wiiki.

Beyond Fairview

As we all know, behind every good man is a kind and strong woman. Anyone who knows Jim's wife, Renee, understands that they are a great team. She is a dedicated mother and loving wife who enjoys life to the fullest. Jim met Renee at a Christmas party in December of 2000, and they were married in 2002. They have two children—Vincent 6, and Sophia 4—who spend quite a bit of time on the course with their dad.

Kevin Collins, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is Mid-Atlantic and Northeast territory manager for Aquatrols Corp. of America and the owner/president of DryJet Northeast/TurfPounders.

Spotlight

Apawamis and Perlee Promise a Jolly Good Time at the MetGCSA Christmas Party

Editor's Note: This is our abbreviated spotlight format for superintendents who have been profiled within the past three years. At the article's end, we explain how to access Bill's last, full-length profile, should you want to read more.

This year on December 10, Christmas comes to The Apawamis Club in Rye, NY. Playing host to his second Met function in the past two years, Superintendent Bill Perlee is looking forward to showing everyone a jolly good time at the Met's annual gala holiday event.

Like the Annual Meeting Bill hosted two years ago, this event won't showcase the course, but rather the classic early American/Dutch-style clubhouse, offering a cozy, festive setting for our holiday gathering.

About the Club...

Recognized by the USGA and *Golf Magazine* as one of the first 100 golf clubs in America, Apawamis was founded in 1890—not as a golf club, but rather a beach club on the shores of Long Island Sound. Its name, Apawamis, came from an American Indian word used to describe an area near Rye. A few years after the club opened, it left its seaside roost, buying a small plot of land and constructing a nine-hole course. Then, in 1896, the club's current site was purchased, and construction began to build an 18-hole layout.

Scotsman Willie Dunn of Shinnecock fame was hired to design the course, much of which has remained the same. There have been modifications made over the years, the most recent in 2001. This renovation was in many ways a restoration, which involved rebuilding six greens and a complete bunker renovation that resulted in the addition of 40 new bunkers. No small undertaking, this project also included expanding many of the fairways, rebuilding the tees to add length where possible, and constructing a practice chipping and putting facility. Today, Apawamis is a par 72 course that plays just under 6,500 yards.

Over the years, the club has hosted four USGA championships, numerous American Junior Golf Association events and, each year since 1905, is one of the host courses for the United States Senior Golf Association's annual championship. Rich in tradition, the membership enjoys firm, fast conditions on a daily basis.

About Our Host

Education: In addition to completing Cornell University's Winter Turf Management Course in 1994, Bill earned a B.S. in computer science from Empire State College in 1987.

Career Moves: Bill has been the superintendent at Apawamis for the past 14 years, after cutting his teeth at Sleepy Hollow under Joe Camberato and a stint as golf



Bill Perlee

course superintendent at Burning Tree Country Club in Greenwich, CT. During his time at Apawamis, Bill ushered the club through its 2001 renovations and is currently gearing up to tackle a new maintenance facility in 2011.

On a Personal Note: When not at work, some of Bill's favorite pastimes revolve around his wife of 20 years, Lorah, and his children, Sarah, 15, and Bryan, 12. The Perlee family is sports-minded through and through. Bryan and Lorah are avid soccer players, while Bill and Sarah share the family's passion for skiing and snowboarding.

In addition to being natural athletes, they apparently also share an ear for music. Bryan plays the drums, Sarah the alto and tenor sax, Lorah the electric bass guitar, and Bill, in his own words, has "kinda taken up the guitar."

Rumor also has it that Bill and Sarah are raising chickens in the backyard and working together at Apawamis to make the golf course a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

When able to squeeze in some Bill time, he enjoys playing golf for "the Cup" with some hometown friends from high school and in the Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Tournament with his longtime partner Bob Nielsen.

Final Note: Remember to join fellow Met members at The Apawamis Club on December 10 for the association's premier social event of the season, and be sure to give Bill some grief about keeping us in the clubhouse and off the course!

For More on Bill: Please refer to our website, www.metgcsa.org, to retrieve the archived January/February 2008 issue where Bill's full profile last appeared.

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